

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEW MEXICO**

LINDSAY SPILSBURY,

Plaintiff,

v.

No. 2:24-cv-00404-JHR

VERA DEMCHOK and
CARICE DEMCHOK,

Defendants.

**MEMORANDUM OPINION AND ORDER
GRANTING APPLICATION TO PROCEED *IN FORMA PAUPERIS*
AND ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE**

THIS MATTER comes before the Court on *pro se* Plaintiff's Civil Rights Complaint Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983, Doc. 1, filed April 29, 2024 ("Complaint"), and Plaintiff's Application to Proceed in District Court Without Prepaying Fees or Costs, Doc. 2, filed April 29, 2024.

Application to Proceed *in forma pauperis*

The statute for proceedings *in forma pauperis*, 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a), provides that the Court may authorize the commencement of any suit without prepayment of fees by a person who submits an affidavit that includes a statement of all assets the person possesses and that the person is unable to pay such fees.

When a district court receives an application for leave to proceed in forma pauperis, it should examine the papers and determine if the requirements of [28 U.S.C.] § 1915(a) are satisfied. If they are, leave should be granted. Thereafter, if the court finds that the allegations of poverty are untrue or that the action is frivolous or malicious, it may dismiss the case[.]

Menefee v. Werholtz, 368 Fed.Appx. 879, 884 (10th Cir. 2010) (citing *Ragan v. Cox*, 305 F.2d 58, 60 (10th Cir. 1962). "The statute [allowing a litigant to proceed in forma pauperis] was intended

for the benefit of those too poor to pay or give security for costs....” *Adkins v. E.I. DuPont de Nemours & Co.*, 335 U.S. 331, 344 (1948). While a litigant need not be “absolutely destitute,” “an affidavit is sufficient which states that one cannot because of his poverty pay or give security for the costs and still be able to provide himself and dependents with the necessities of life.” *Id.* at 339.

The Court grants Plaintiff’s Application to Proceed in District Court Without Prepaying Fees or Costs. Plaintiff signed an affidavit stating she is unable to pay the costs of these proceedings and provided the following information: (i) Plaintiff’s average monthly income amount during the past 12 months is \$0.00; and (ii) Plaintiff’s monthly expenses total \$791.00. The Court finds that Plaintiff is unable to pay the costs of this proceeding because she signed an affidavit stating she is unable to pay the costs of this proceeding and because she has no income.

The Complaint

Plaintiff alleges:

Carice Demchok has allowed her daughter Vera Demchok to breach confidential privacy Vera has been extremely dangerous about electronically or digitally harrassing me Vera has a brain exhibit on my brother’s phone she knows what I think and shes using and sharing my thoughts digitally and harassing me to the extent of murder. Vera has war weapons w/ the exhibit and she uses them on my body and has made extremley sick. Shes threatning my freedom and shes violating my human rights. . . Vera Demchok waged war on me poisoned me . . . Carice allowed Vera to rape me . . . Vera Demchok . . . has taken my identity social security Indian cards naturalization documents college degree arrest records document on my divorce documents on my attorney . . . Donald Trump, the press, the media, the public, Vera Demchok is broadcasting me. Joe Biden can hear me due to Vera Demchok broadcasting me.

[sic] Complaint at 2-4.

As the party seeking to invoke the jurisdiction of this Court, Plaintiff bears the burden of alleging facts that support jurisdiction. *See Dutcher v. Matheson*, 733 F.3d 980, 985 (10th Cir. 2013) (“Since federal courts are courts of limited jurisdiction, we presume no jurisdiction exists

absent an adequate showing by the party invoking federal jurisdiction”); *Evitt v. Durland*, 243 F.3d 388 *2 (10th Cir. 2000) (“even if the parties do not raise the question themselves, it is our duty to address the apparent lack of jurisdiction sua sponte”) (quoting *Tuck v. United Servs. Auto. Ass'n*, 859 F.2d 842, 843 (10th Cir.1988)).

There is no properly alleged federal-question jurisdiction because the Complaint does not allege that this action “aris[es] under the Constitution, laws, or treaties of the United States.” 28 U.S.C. § 1331.

“For a case to arise under federal law within the meaning of § 1331, the plaintiff’s well-pleaded complaint must establish one of two things: either that federal law creates the cause of action or that the plaintiff’s right to relief necessarily depends on resolution of a substantial question of federal law” . . . “The complaint must identify the statutory or constitutional provision under which the claim arises, and allege sufficient facts to show that the case is one arising under federal law.”

Davison v. Grant Thornton LLP, 582 Fed.Appx. 773, 775 (10th Cir. 2014) (quoting *Firstenberg v. City of Santa Fe*, 696 F.3d 1018, 1023 (10th Cir.2012) and *Martinez v. U.S. Olympic Committee*, 802 F.2d 1275, 1280 (10th Cir. 1986)). Plaintiff filed her Complaint using the form “Civil Rights Complaint Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983.” Plaintiff has not shown that this case arises under Section 1983 because there are no factual allegations showing that Defendants were acting under color of state law. *See Schaffer v. Salt Lake City Corp.*, 814 F.3d 1151, 1155 (10th Cir. 2016) (“The two elements of a Section 1983 claim are (1) deprivation of a federally protected right by (2) an actor acting under color of state law”).

There is no properly alleged diversity jurisdiction. To invoke diversity jurisdiction, “a party must show that complete diversity of citizenship exists between the adverse parties and that the amount in controversy exceeds \$75,000.” *Symes v. Harris*, 472 F.3d 754, 758 (10th Cir.2006). “Complete diversity is lacking when any of the plaintiffs has the same residency as even a single

defendant.” *Dutcher v. Matheson*, 733 F.3d 980, 987 (10th Cir. 2013). Plaintiff, who is a citizen of New Mexico, has not alleged that Defendants are citizens of a state other than New Mexico.

The Court orders Plaintiff to show cause why the Court should not dismiss this case for lack of jurisdiction. *See* Fed. R. Civ. P. 12(h)(3) (“If the court determines at any time that it lacks subject-matter jurisdiction, the court must dismiss the action”). If Plaintiff asserts the Court should not dismiss this case, Plaintiff must file an amended complaint that states a claim over which the Court has jurisdiction. *See Nasious v. Two Unknown B.I.C.E. Agents, at Arapahoe County Justice Center*, 492 F.3d 1158, 1163 (10th Cir. 2007) (“[T]o state a claim in federal court, a complaint must explain what each defendant did to him or her; when the defendant did it; how the defendant’s action harmed him or her; and, what specific legal right the plaintiff believes the defendant violated.”).

Service on Defendants

Section 1915 provides that the “officers of the court shall issue and serve all process, and perform all duties in [proceedings *in forma pauperis*]”). 28 U.S.C. § 1915(d). The Court will not order service of Summons and Complaint on Defendants at this time because the Court is ordering Plaintiff to file an amended complaint. The Court will order service if Plaintiff files: (i) an amended complaint that states a claim over which the Court has jurisdiction; and (ii) a motion for service which provides each Defendant’s address.

Case Management

Generally, *pro se* litigants are held to the same standards of professional responsibility as trained attorneys. It is a *pro se* litigant’s responsibility to become familiar with and to comply with the *Federal Rules of Civil Procedure* and the *Local Rules of the United States District Court for the District of New Mexico* (the “Local Rules”).

Guide for Pro Se Litigants at 4, United States District Court, District of New Mexico (October 2022). The Local Rules, the Guide for Pro Se Litigants and a link to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure are available on the Court's website: <http://www.nmd.uscourts.gov>.

Compliance with Rule 11

The Court reminds Plaintiff of her obligations pursuant to Rule 11 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. *See Yang v. Archuleta*, 525 F.3d 925, 927 n. 1 (10th Cir. 2008) (“*Pro se* status does not excuse the obligation of any litigant to comply with the fundamental requirements of the Federal Rules of Civil and Appellate Procedure.”). Rule 11(b) provides:

Representations to the Court. By presenting to the court a pleading, written motion, or other paper--whether by signing, filing, submitting, or later advocating it--an attorney or unrepresented party certifies that to the best of the person's knowledge, information, and belief, formed after an inquiry reasonable under the circumstances:

(1) it is not being presented for any improper purpose, such as to harass, cause unnecessary delay, or needlessly increase the cost of litigation;

(2) the claims, defenses, and other legal contentions are warranted by existing law or by a nonfrivolous argument for extending, modifying, or reversing existing law or for establishing new law;

(3) the factual contentions have evidentiary support or, if specifically so identified, will likely have evidentiary support after a reasonable opportunity for further investigation or discovery; and

(4) the denials of factual contentions are warranted on the evidence or, if specifically so identified, are reasonably based on belief or a lack of information.

Fed. R. Civ. P. 11(b). Failure to comply with the requirements of Rule 11 may subject Plaintiff to sanctions, including monetary penalties and nonmonetary directives. *See* Fed. R. Civ. P. 11(c).

IT IS ORDERED that:

- (i) Plaintiff's Application to Proceed in District Court Without Prepaying Fees or Costs, Doc. 2, filed April 29, 2024, is **GRANTED**.

- (ii) Plaintiff shall, within 21 days of entry of this Order: (i) show cause why the Court should not dismiss this case; and (ii) file an amended complaint. Failure to timely show cause and file an amended complaint may result in dismissal of this case.



UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE